

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INTERIM COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Eastern Idaho Technical College
Student Union Building
Idaho Falls, Idaho
July 25, 2006

MINUTES

(As approved by the committee, with corrections¹)

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by **Co-chair Representative Darrell Bolz**. Other members present were: Co-chair Senator John Goedde, Senators John Andreason, Bart Davis, Patti Anne Lodge and Edgar Malepeai, and Representatives Jim Clark, Julie Ellsworth, Leon Smith, Larry Bradford, Ann Rydalch, Marge Chadderdon, Donna Boe and John Rusche. Senators Dean Cameron, Brad Little and Joe Stegner were absent and excused. Senator David Langhorst was absent. Staff present were Maureen Ingram, Matt Freeman and Jennifer O’Kief.

Others present were William A. Robertson, President, Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC), Jacque Larsen, Jan Karinen, Becky Chapman, and Peggy Nelson, EITC; Dr. Arthur C. Vailas, President, Idaho State University (ISU), Robert Croker, Kay Christensen, Byron Miles, Cynthia Pemberton, Robert Wharton, Ann Howell, Debbie Thompson, Linda Hatzenbuehler², Jennifer Fisher, Linda Barnier, Marilyn Davis, Janice Matteson-Howell, Deb Hedeem, Teena Rhoads, John Kijinski, Kent Kunz, Dick Jacobsen, and Kay Flowers, ISU; Dr. Dene Thomas, President, Lewis-Clark State College; Robb Chiles, President and CEO, Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Andrew Klein, Director for Education, Training and Research, Idaho National Laboratory; Edith Irving, President, Idaho Alliance of Leaders in Nursing, Chief Nursing Officer at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center; Terry Butikofer, Business Manager, East Central Idaho Planning and Development Association; Blake G. Hall and Dwight Johnson, State Board of Education; Representative Jack Barraclough, Idaho Legislature; Dr. Gerald Beck, President, College of Southern Idaho; Kent Propst, North Idaho College; Ross Borden, Boise State University; Matt Hunter, Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce; Mike Rush, Professional-Technical Education; Marge Foster, School Districts 91 and 93; Kevin Richert, Idaho Statesman; Larry Ghan, Bannock County Commissioner; Bill Bach, University of Phoenix; Lyn Darrington, AMI Semiconductor; Mike Reynoldson, Micron Technology; Mark Young; Dean Mortimer, FFC; John McGimpsey; Corey Taule, Idaho Falls Post Register; and Glynii³ A. Gilliam, Bannock Development Corporation.

Representative Boe moved to approve the minutes of July 7, 2006, seconded by **Senator Malepeai**. **Co-chair Senator Goedde** requested correction of typographical and clerical errors on pages 2, 4, 7

¹ Corrections on pages 1 and 17 as noted

² Correction on spelling of last name

³ Correction on spelling of first name

and 9. The motion to approve the minutes, including correction of the errors as specified, carried unanimously on a voice vote.

William A. Robertson, President, Eastern Idaho Technical College, presented a short video which captured the essence of EITC and presented an overview of the history and of the functions of the college and the programs it provides. The video also portrayed brief interviews with students who shared the positive experiences that they have had while attending EITC.

President Robertson said the college was created in 1969 by the Legislature through passage of House Bill 474. The original name was Eastern Idaho Vocational School. After a director, staff and a facility were in place, the college opened its doors to classes in September of 1970. The campus resides on 65 acres which were purchased in 1970 with a grant from the Idaho Nuclear Corporation, which at the time was the prime contractor of Idaho National Labs. Since that time, EITC has had a long and positive relationship with all of the contractors at Idaho National Laboratory (INL). He emphasized that EITC is a technical college, not a community college, although it provides an academic core component that is required for an associate degree program.

President Robertson noted the John Sessions Mechanical Building, named for John Sessions, a former legislator, who was instrumental in creating the legislation for the college. The first phase of that building was begun in 1972. Now, there are four modern facilities on campus, comprising over 225,000 square feet. Construction has begun on the recently-funded health education building, which was financed as a bonding project. He acknowledged the supplemental \$3.5 million received from the Legislature to help with the project.

At the request of the State Board of Education, EITC and ISU have worked collaboratively in the design of the building, bringing it up to the standard of greatest efficiency. This effort will help accommodate the educational needs of students at EITC and the needs of ISU students in their health education programs that will operate in Idaho Falls. Many of the campus buildings were funded not only by state appropriation through the Permanent Building Fund, but also with federal and local money. Federal and state moneys were leveraged at every opportunity so that the state resource would go a little further. The health education building is projected to open in August of 2007. There is a proposed master plan for the remaining 25 acres of campus that have not been developed.

The governance of the college is operated under the administrative control of the State Board of Education (SBOE) functioning as the State Board for Professional-Technical Education (PTE). Additionally, as authorized by *Idaho Code*, a local executive Advisory Council has been appointed by the SBOE. The fifteen-member council is comprised of a cross section of area leaders in business and industry who provide advice and counsel to both the college and the SBOE relative to college programs and operations at EITC. He emphasized that the role of the council is strictly limited to an advisory capacity. They are not an administrative council or a board of trustees. They function as volunteers essentially, nominated by the college and by community solicitation, with final appointments made by the State Board. He added that the council makes a very significant contribution and is very valuable to the college. EITC also has a working relationship with the state division of PTE. The division helps with instructional programs and certification of personnel and faculty. They administer, among others, the federal Perkins Grants, workforce training network, and emergency services training, that are critical to the operation of the college.

Financially, EITC operates primarily with state general fund appropriations, supplemented with student fees and a number of grants and contracts. The total revenue from all sources over the last fiscal year was \$8,041,126, two-thirds of which came from the State General Fund. As is true of all of the technical colleges in the state system, their state operating funds come from an allocation from the Division of PTE, rather than through a direct appropriation earmarked specifically for the college. Additionally, they have a vibrant foundation that supports the college, principally for student scholarships. Their annual awards exceed \$100,000 in scholarships. They currently have assets in excess of \$3 million. The foundation is much like the Advisory Council in that they are volunteers who serve on the Board of Directors. They are at “arms length” from the college with no fiduciary responsibility or connection with the college, so that there is no room for misappropriation or mishandling of funding. They are audited separately from the college.

President Robertson drew attention to the five major categories of instructional opportunities at the college: Pre-employment Credit, Workforce Training & Apprentice, Adult Basic Education Services, Cooperative High School Programs, and Community Education.

The Pre-employment Credit programs are divided into four major divisions of the college: Health Care Technologies, Business, Office and Technology, Trades and Industry, and Emergency Services Training. Among these, there are fifteen degree programs and thirty certificate-level programs. He believes the primary objective of the students is that they get directly to work, increase their earning power and create a career path. There are representative advisory committees for all of the technical programs, and these partners from industry advise on matters of curriculum and provide internships for students, clinical experiences, faculty upgrades, and guest instructors. They also donate equipment and supplies. **President Robertson** noted that this is an ongoing partnership without which the college would not operate very efficiently.

Workforce/Apprentice Training is their largest division in terms of number of students enrolled and courses offered. Most of the programs were offered at the request of area employers to serve their incumbent workers. Some of the programs offered are: short term PTE courses and apprentice training in plumbing and electrical crafts; emergency services training; wildland fire and firefighter training; emergency medical courses; and a variety of other courses targeted principally to the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory that partners with EITC. The wildland fire training is offered in contract service with the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service. There are over one hundred internet courses offered through the rural outreach services efforts.

Adult Basic Education Services offer courses in basic skills instruction such as math and reading, English as a second language, GED preparation, services for disabled youth prevocational and independent living skills, and job educational training programs for low-income parents of dependent children in collaboration with the Department of Health and Welfare.

Cooperative High School Programs are campus-based high school programs offered in collaboration with regional PTE high school and area school districts. Courses consist of health occupations, automotive technology, horticulture and electronics.

Finally, Community Education programs are used by the general public for nonvocational classes, which are paid for on a cost-recovery basis, and cover personal interests and hobbies for the general public, using some of the college facilities.

President Robertson noted that there is a strong component to general education that supports the Associate Applied Science degree requirements. This is accomplished with a master's degree faculty and with adjunct faculty hired for specific courses. They are offered to meet the technical program requirements and satisfy the accreditation standards set for them.

In discussing accreditation, **President Robertson** said that EITC is fully accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The college has achieved a large number of industry certifications for various programs including the Microsoft Academy, Novell Academic Partner, NATEF Certification, Accreditation Review Committee for Education in Surgical Technology (ARC-ST), AAMA Certification, and AWS Training Center. These are all critical validations of the programs offered and they are enhancements for employment opportunities for their students.

Within the FY2005 enrollment figures, most students were in workforce training (7,106) and the accredited/certificate programs (1,447). Their credit enrollments in the last few years have dropped considerably due to an inverse relationship between the employment rates and for-credit enrollments, which is probably a temporary situation; however, workforce training has increased tremendously. The average age of students is 29.5 years old, 70% are female, and most are from Bonneville County.

Regarding financial aid, **President Robertson** referred to the total scholarship awards amounting to \$145,565. Of that, \$113,292 was from EITC Foundation Scholarships; Robert Lee Promise A Scholarships, \$3,000; Robert Lee Promise B Scholarships, \$25,045; and Governor's Challenge, \$3,000. The Student Services Division is the "window" of the institution. Applicants typically encounter the counseling/admission staff upon enrolling in the institution, along with an array of other services.

The Outreach Program serves a nine county region in southeastern Idaho. The faculty and staff are challenged to find ways to be more responsive to the rural communities, noting it is much easier to provide programs on the EITC campus than sites off-campus. Some of the programs include workforce training, adult basic education, English as a second language and the LPN program. EITC has been very successful in taking their nursing program to some of the rural areas. **President Robertson** explained that a few years ago, following a dialogue between the Steele Memorial Hospital in Salmon, Idaho and EITC, the hospital made a request to put a nursing program together. EITC contributed resources and worked collaboratively with the hospital to develop a distance-education program. They were able to provide an onsite program in Salmon, with faculty and with the aid of interactive video through telecommunications.

A similar program was started at the Teton Valley Hospital in Driggs, Idaho and in Arco, Idaho. Finding qualified nurses to move to rural areas is very difficult, which is one of the reasons behind pioneering these programs in the rural areas and providing the opportunity and education to individuals who are already living in these areas. EITC has partnered with the Idaho Department of Transportation in utilizing their "microwave system" to carry some of these distance-education programs into these areas for a small access fee of \$100 per month. Another area included in this program is St. Anthony, Idaho. One of the challenges in distance education is being able to provide a "hands on" approach, which is what EITC has taken responsibility for doing. Typically, the facilities used are high schools, public school buildings, and public libraries. Distance education is also provided in prisons, county jails, and at the Arco Youth Ranch. Rent for the use of these facilities, if any, is minimal.

EITC partners, in various capacities, with are the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Eastern Idaho Superintendents Association, Idaho Migrant Council, Idaho National Laboratory, Grow Idaho Falls, Inc., The Development Company, The Regional Development Alliance, Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce, and North Custer and Lemhi County Economic Development Corporation. The viability and success of their programs depends on interaction with business and industry. The college has developed a strong network with government, education and economic development groups as well.

President Robertson concluded by saying that they are one of six technical colleges in the state system; the other five are situated on university, college or community college campuses. All of the services provided by the college are offered in an affordable way, assuring residents opportunities for higher education as well as secondary. He said that the technical colleges, EITC in particular, do a significant number of the same things that are found in a community college, and suggested that the committee consider that they not neglect the PTE system during their continuing discussions of this community college issue. He added that there may be some answers for them within that framework with some expansion of vision and new services that EITC could help with in that regard. A copy of **President Robertson's** PowerPoint presentation is available in the Legislative Services Office.

Senator Andreason inquired that if the Robert Lee Promise Scholarships were increased, would that have a positive effect on the program, or stated in another way, are you getting enough from that program? **President Robertson** replied that EITC could never have enough scholarship money. The average age of their students is about 30 years old. There is a significant number of students who are trying to support a family and typically do not have enough resources. They are coming back to college because they want the opportunity for a new career. He said that without question, additional scholarships and grants for their students would go a long way to help. **Senator Andreason** asked whether the outlying areas have been well-saturated or are there opportunities to expand existing projects. **President Robertson** replied that the GED market will never be saturated; it will always be ongoing. Regarding the credit programs, the surface has barely been scratched because of the limitations in available resources, but they are committed to finding more ways to take programs out to the rural areas, which are literally starving for education.

Senator Goedde asked if the credits in the academic classes offered by EITC are transferable to other institutions. **President Robertson** replied that they are transferable. Under the direction of the State Board of Education, there is a policy that mandates the acceptance of those courses across the state. It is up to the receiving institution, in-state or out-of-state, to classify how those credits are received; they may be classified as elective credits, or required credits. **Senator Goedde** asked what it would take to elevate EITC to a community college level. **President Robertson** replied that they had been asked by the SBOE last spring to prepare a request for information (RFI) to indicate how EITC could expand to fulfill the community college mission. The essence of that document suggests that they have a considerable number of the elements of a comprehensive community college now in place: access, affordability, student services, the PTE component, and remediation. What EITC does not have is authority to offer the general education core curricula for the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. As a consequence, an expanded mission to create a comprehensive community college would require that EITC be authorized to offer the curricula to support an AS and an AA degree, and be given the resources necessary to create such curricula and the faculty necessary to teach those core curricula programs. At the request of **Senator Goedde**, **President Robertson** will make that RFI document available to the committee.

Senator Lodge asked how many student nurses, approximately, have graduated from the nursing programs in the rural areas that he mentioned earlier. **President Robertson** estimated that the first group of Salmon students had 18 graduates; 15 to 18 in the first Driggs group; 12 to 15 in the Arco group. He will provide the committee with the specific numbers. He added that not more than 20 students are enrolled in any of those programs, due to the clinical requirements. **Senator Lodge** asked **President Robertson** to apply a dollar figure, when he is gathering that information, of what the cost is per student to provide that education in those rural areas. She said that she believes that number will really make an impact in those small hospitals. **Senator Lodge** asked if **President Robertson** ever tracks where GED students at EITC have previously attended school. **President Robertson** replied that they have not tracked that kind of information. He said that is something that they would research and make available. He added that a large percentage of people who come in to take outreach GED tests are not people who have just dropped out of high school; agewise, they are somewhat older. **Senator Lodge** responded that she would like to know the number of GED students whose last school experience had been in Idaho schools. **President Robertson** replied that the State Department of Education would probably have that information as it is required to be reported to the state department.

Representative Rusche asked what it costs the families with students in the PTE tracks and how that compares with the same track at ISU or elsewhere. **President Robertson** replied that their fees in the Fall will be \$80 per credit; or \$800 for full-time student per semester. In addition to the enrollment, there are other fees, depending on the discipline, such as lab fees. He estimated that the tuition and fees for ISU-PTE programs and ISU academic programs are the same, which is about two and one half times what EITC charges students. **Representative Rusche** asked that if EITC were to become a community college, would that tuition fall into the community college range. **President Robertson** said that in their analysis, they believe that any comprehensive community college that provides access for everyone needs to provide fees that are low; \$100 per credit is the current figure being considered, which is still less than what a four-year university charges.

Representative Smith asked the following questions:

- (1) Who owns the campus?
- (2) What is the total value of all campus buildings for insurance purposes?
- (3) What is the funding from local support?
- (4) What is the indebtedness?

President Robertson said that the campus (buildings, equipment and land), is owned by the state of Idaho. There is no indebtedness directly; EITC is prohibited by Idaho law from entering into any debt servicing. The exception is in their connection with the “admin” of the health education building which was a bonded project with the Idaho Building Authority, which relies on state appropriation. The Building Authority and the Division of Public Works are handling the debt service on that particular building. The breakout of their costs is not readily available, but **President Robertson** said that he would provide that information.

Regarding the value of the campus, a recent appraisal was done; the report has not been received yet. He estimated that the facilities are insured for approximately \$50 million currently. He offered to verify that figure with the Department of Administration and provide it for the committee. The land itself has been appraised at slightly over \$10 million.

Representative Smith commented that he had understood there was an attempt by the community at one time to have an election to form a community college district and asked **President Robertson** if he could provide some detail on that event. **President Robertson** said the event took place in 1991 and only Bonneville County was involved in the plan. The impetus was community based; business leaders took the lead and approached the idea of having a comprehensive community college. There had been about an 18-month dialogue with the community centering around what the community college would be. The proposal failed not only to receive a two-thirds majority vote, it did not even get a majority vote.

Representative Rydalch commended **President Robertson** for the partnering that has been done by the college and said those efforts help to reduce the need for more “bricks and mortar” in establishing a community college system. She commented that this has been exemplified through the distance-learning program that EITC has been managing. She prefaced her question by saying that the committee has often been told in their meetings about losing local control and that the State Board of Education runs everything if it is a state funded institution. In her opinion, she has never sensed there wasn’t local control. She asked if being dependent upon state money has been a hindrance to governance and local control, or have they been able to turn things around businesswise as needed, communitywise, workforce training as needed, or did it take an “act of God” through the state board. **President Robertson** responded that the SBOE has worked very closely with the college in a very supportive role, that the state board has not created any artificial impediments; the state board responds quickly. He recognized Blake Hall, a member of the state board, who has been very supportive of what they do. EITC still works with the Division of PTE, which is critical to their program. They have the capability to “start-up” their workforce training and can provide services almost immediately to a business with a specific request. He added that the Advisory Council and community helps them in finding what they may need to do, which is done without any interference; it is a non-issue.

Senator Goedde said that one of the options this committee will be looking at is the establishment or elevation of a community college in Idaho Falls. He asked **President Robertson** to explain how that action can be justified to Kootenai County property taxpayers who voted for a community college district and who support the community college with their tax dollars, yet Idaho Falls taxpayers rejected that option. He queried also, if the electorate had not, in fact, rejected it twice.

President Robertson replied that the only time that he knows of that the issue was rejected was in 1991. He said that there is a good deal of General Fund money to support the those community colleges, notwithstanding the local tax base. There is also a good deal of the Permanent Building Fund money that supports the capital campaigns on those campuses; and the PTE division on those campuses is supported the same way that EITC is supported. There are also student fees that are generated on their campuses as well as community colleges campuses, but EITC does not enjoy the liquor tax revenues that go their way, let alone the tuition assistance for out-of-district students. He commented that, in that respect, maybe those differences are not so profound. The other issue is that the state board has mandated ISU, BSU, and LCSC to have a community college mission. How does that differ from a state-funded community college? He said that it could be argued that they may be one and the same.

Senator Goedde responded that his taxpayers do not think that their \$6.6 million of property taxes is insignificant, to which **President Robertson** respectfully assured the senator that he did not intend to demean the efforts of the taxpayers in Kootenai County and heartily agreed that those dollars are

significant; he was merely trying to point out the various sources of revenues and those percentages, which support all colleges.

Dr. Arthur C. Vailas, President, Idaho State University, said ISU is an inclusive university offering many learning experiences for students throughout life. ISU offers access to a wide range of intellectual and cultural experiences; access to a comprehensive range of student support services; is an inclusive environment that supports students in a variety of programs at a variety of levels; and offers an appreciation of inquiry and the creation of new knowledge that is fundamental to all levels of education. Universities throughout the country, including ISU, have adopted the rationale of having an integrated system of education. ISU offers associate degree programs as well as baccalaureates. He described a “Ladder of Opportunity at Research Institutions,” which illustrates the range of programs offered, from adult basic education to that of professional/doctoral degree programs.

This ladder is critical to the United States in making us a competitive nation. He presented the following national statistics: only 18 out of every 100 ninth graders will graduate from college within 3-6 years of finishing high school; 40% of 4-year and 63% of 2-year college students must take remedial courses; the percent of bachelor's degree holders in the national workforce is expected to decline over the next 15 years; 35% of 4 million+ college-age students attend college; and despite low tuition by national standards, many Idaho students still cannot afford college. These are challenges facing Idaho as well as the nation.

There is a convergence of national demographic factors, a changing global economy, and educational issues of affordability and access. The ultimate goal no matter what level of employment is sought, is that the educational system encourage independent thinking, creativity and problem-solving, and partnerships in learning. ISU is uniquely situated to meet the needs of Idaho and its citizens. "The dynamic generated by ISU's unique gathering of diverse student needs, resources and abilities underscores the benefits to be gained by research institutions in supporting lower-division general education and PTE education."

Regarding lower division, general education, and PTE courses, **Dr. Vailas** said that ISU offers a number of subcategories of general education that deals with classes of an introductory nature that basically do not yet steer a student into adopting a major, but prepares them for the next level of lower division classes. For example, a student has the choice of taking a lower division chemistry class that will further his scientific career with a baccalaureate degree, or taking one not for the purpose of pursuing a science and math career, but to have a more diversified course of study. Therefore, ISU offers alternate paths for pursuing one's educational aspirations. A full range of educational services helps to bring industries to the community, and those industries enhance the tax base. This is something that must be considered as part of Idaho's infrastructure.

Another area that needs to be considered is the shortage of nurses. Along with considering the pipeline of opportunities in nursing, is the issue of encouraging a subset of that pipeline to become faculty to teach future nurses. ISU deals with an integrated system that reduces duplication and increases efficiency in the articulation of course offerings to their students. Unlike community colleges that have difficulty finding and retaining faculty, universities can recruit and sustain a stable faculty at rates affordable to the taxpayer and the student.

Regarding the issue of access, **Dr. Vailas** referred to the “ladder,” illustrating the wide range of opportunities that ISU provides in the nursing program. The following career choices are offered, beginning at the lower end of the ladder and moving to the upper end: CNA program, LPN program, Associate Degree in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, Post-Master Nursing Certificates, Planned Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Planned Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing. He noted the efficiency in taking classes of consistent and sustainable curriculum, the efficiency of updating that curriculum and being attached to a core faculty. He further noted the concern of community colleges nationwide in trying to find qualified faculty. It is important to recruit and retain the best faculty, so that the access and quality of education are not destabilized.

Affordability is a "two-pronged" issue, meaning affordable to the students and affordable to the state and taxpayers. The differences in existing fees are due to varying levels of state funding. **Dr. Vailas** noted that the parity of support is very different throughout the state and therefore does impact the kinds of fees necessary, and the question of who bears the burden comes into play. To keep your core faculty, in order to continue to offer the kind of content and sustainability, will come at a different cost.

A pie chart was used to illustrate the enrollment in FY2006 for ISU. Total enrollment was 14,000 students, and lower division general education and PTE was 21% of the total enrollment or 3,000 students. Out of the 3,000 students, 1,200 are in PTE courses and 1,800 are in lower division academic courses. For FY2007, the tuition and fees for a full-time student are \$2,095 per semester; part-time, \$214 per credit. For FY2007, the revenue estimate from student tuition and fees is \$11.6 million.

Dr. Vailas presented the scenario that if tuition for lower division and PTE were reduced to a parity that is currently being proposed (Full Time: \$1,200/semester; Part Time: \$120/credit), the revised estimate of revenue would be about \$6.6 million, and revenue loss, based on 3,000 students, would be about \$5 million for ISU. It is better to have stability in the educational system and it is important to have the educational content constantly revised and updated. It is important that institutions nationwide, as well as within our own state, work with other public educational systems. ISU is currently partnering with middle and high schools to excite the students to consider careers which require a postsecondary education. It is important to work with superintendents of the public schools to address the curricular challenges and reduce the need for remediation.

Dr. Vailas said that it is important that we think about a statewide augmentation of financial aid so that we do not hinder the sustainability and continuation of an integrated system. We need to consider increases in general funding or perhaps formula changes that look at the pricing in cost elements of advanced degrees as well as lower division education, whether it be differentials in science or of humanities. Idaho is competing for people throughout the nation and the world; the question is, "How do we support this?" Of ISU's total funding, 30% comes from the state, the rest comes from outside sources.

We need to encourage partnerships with private foundations, business and industry, and with state and federal agencies to bring in non-Idaho dollars into Idaho to support the educational infrastructure. Because Pell grants, etc., relatively speaking, and federal financial aid are decreasing, it is all the more necessary that our universities and public educational system partner and do whatever is necessary to support and enhance our infrastructure.

Representative Bolz prefaced a question by referring to the references **Dr. Vailas** made earlier about considering ISU to be a research institution, and asked if he still sees ISU continuing to offer PTE courses if a community college system were expanded into eastern Idaho. **Dr. Vailas** said that ISU needs PTE-trained persons because the individuals from that program are valuable to ISU and the community. Many of these students, who have received their certifications, are employed at ISU and work within ISU's research infrastructure. It is important that ISU continue to have PTE in its "ladder" to provide a fully-integrated service. **Representative Bolz** then referred to BSU's proposal to spin off its PTE programs to a community college despite the loss of those students and the revenue that will follow them. He noted that at the same time, slots are opened up, making room for more 4-year students. He asked whether that would offset the loss of revenue. **Dr. Vailas** replied that in his opinion, if they stay connected and keep their "ladder" of course offerings, they will encourage a healthy enrollment into their undergraduate and graduate programs. However, the fear is if they become disconnected, there is no insurance that the kind of product that they receive will be able to integrate into that "ladder" in an efficient way. He further replied that the university has had no say in the kind of curriculum that is being offered at that division. He would rather err on the side of reducing the risk of any kind of failure in providing a great qualified workforce to fit right into their research mission.

Representative Smith commented that his understanding is that currently ISU gets the "lion's share" of funding from the state for their vocational-technical programs, which is \$10.1 million out of \$37 million; EITC receives \$5.8 million. EITC charges about \$100 per hour for PTE courses and ISU charges \$214 per hour for PTE courses. He further commented that in opinion such disparity in fees would drive people away from ISU to attend another less expensive institution. **Dr. Vailas** acknowledged that fact and said they are currently looking into this issue to see if they can adjust downward for parity with the existing educational opportunities.

Senator Davis commented that the BSU model, suggested by Dr. Kustra, includes divesting its community college and technical education functions to a community college in the Treasure Valley, assuming with confidence that over 3 to 5 years, the enrollment numbers will bounce back up. He asked, given the impact of BYU-Idaho (Rick's College) having gone from a 2-year to a 4-year institution and its impact on ISU's enrollment, together with adopting a BSU model, how could that further impact enrollment and the long-term sustainability of ISU, not just in the Pocatello market but as it meets the higher educational needs of the National Lab in Idaho Falls and in the "desert." **Dr. Vailas** explained that many research universities have not abandoned their mission in terms of PTE or a lower division education, but he does not necessarily agree with that strategy and fears that it will have an impact on the research infrastructure down the road. It is important that they have a strong say as to what is being taught, to ensure a quality education in those programs; there needs to be some involvement.

He further commented that high-tech is the market of the future, so it is in the best interests of ISU to offer upper division graduate and Ph.D. opportunities. The fear is the disengaging of the other part because a prospective biotech or energy company may be looking at the "pipeline" and what kind of support system is available. "If you were to go to the INL lab and you talk to many of the people in my tour, there were so many professional-technical educated people as well as baccalaureates that provided the nuts and bolts to the operations of that lab, and it was so important that they were there with the Ph.D.s and the faculty professors to know what they had to do. And if we cut that line, we run the risk of disintegration."

Representative Rydalch referred to the anticipated revenue loss if community college and PTE programs were spun off to a local community college and asked for a rationale for not doing that, given what ISU offers, how it interfaces with INL, and knowing that community colleges are a gateway to further education. Would it be possible to create a program where, if students achieve a certain grade point average at a community college in Idaho, they are automatically accepted into a university in Idaho? Can we further entice students toward that gateway of learning and work as a partnership here? **Dr. Vailas** replied that a grade-point average from an institution will get you into an institution, but does not assure that you will articulate well. "Getting in is not enough; getting through is what you want. Without giving the institutions of focus... the opportunity to have a say in terms of the requirements and in terms of the content, then what is the risk that you are running.... that the student is going to be very well prepared....?" Students at ISU see their professors inspiring them and working to help guarantee their success.

Dr. Vailas said he is looking for balance; they will not only be putting most of their resources into programs such as science and engineering. However, at the same time, they do not want to abandon other important aspects. "It's not the student getting into the university, it's the success of completing the degree." A student who enters from a community college, who hasn't completed the associate's degree, has a greater chance of dropping out and not succeeding. When such students do not succeed, they have taken the slot of someone who could have.

Senator Goedde, referring to the transferability of classes from both the technical and community college level, asked whether, if he were to take an entry level math class at EITC or NIC, those credits would transfer? Is this an articulation problem? Do you recognize those courses and give students entering ISU credit for those classes? **Dr. Vailas** replied that they recognize the credits for purposes of entering into the university, but that does not guarantee that those particular credits fulfill the degree requirement for the student's major.

Senator Davis, building on **Representative Rydalch's** comment/question, said that his biggest concern regarding ISU enrollment is not the preservation of an institution, but rather it is the meaningful delivery of quality education to the people of eastern Idaho and particularly Bonneville County. In order for him to be able to deliver that educational model to the people of his region, he has to have solid professors who can deliver that education, particularly in his community where so much education is delivered in support of the National Lab, which is a big economic driver in this part of the state as well as to the whole state. Given that he has to have quality faculty that can deliver master's and doctoral programs as well as lower division, he asked how, as a state going through this enrollment adjustment, (downward and upward BSU model) can he hold onto those faculty members during this adjustment period when ISU is also looking at addressing the very target that **Representative Smith** is suggesting. You've got to be more competitive costwise, but if you are going to be more competitive costwise there, how do you have the dollars and the resources to hold onto this faculty? He noted that **Dr. Vailas** has come to Idaho from Texas. He asked how Texas has addressed this "hold harmless" approach.

Dr. Vailas said that if that spinoff should happen, the obvious thing would be to focus, retrench, and redirect their resources to the upper division and graduate levels because the communities such as yours need to have that infrastructure. We do need to keep our best quality faculty, not because of the institution, but for the students, who are our number 1 priority. Students deserve to be next to the best

minds that we can possibly give them, no matter what level of education we have, which comes at a cost.

In the state of Texas, it was a matter of reorganization and retrenchment, and focusing on the strengths; but what the state did understand is that you cannot do this without some assistance during the transition, or it will decimate the institution, destroying what you already offer and have worked so long and hard to create. To maintain the “ladder” of integration and keep our best faculty, “hold harmless” funding was definitely needed. After two years of support, we were able to recover and restore our enrollment.

A copy of **President Vailas’** PowerPoint presentation entitled "Idaho's Unique and Inclusive Learning Community," is available in the Legislative Services Office.

Dr. Dene Thomas, President, Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) said that LCSC fits in the middle “niche.” It is not a two-year college, but it performs those functions. Its three-part mission is to provide academic programs, professional-technical programs, and community college/community support programs. It also partners with BSU, ISU, U of I, NIC, and CSI. It is the oldest college in Idaho with a community college function, beginning in 1893 as a normal school or teacher’s college. The purpose of the “normal school” movement was to prepare teachers for serving in rural schools; in effect, to educate the whole populace, not just those who could pay. In 1965, the SBOE approved a four-year curriculum in education and liberal arts, and established Lewis-Clark State College as one of Idaho’s six postsecondary vocational schools. LCSC has a strong heritage for broad-based educational services.

LCSC has 3,500 students, both traditional students and nontypical, one third of whom are professional-technical students. Eighty-five percent are Idaho residents; one half of the remaining are from Asotin County, Washington. LCSC serves a five-county area, offering continuing education and distance-education programs, workshops, conferences, apprenticeship and workforce training programs, and various noncredit educational programs. Last year, LCSC provided over 250 online courses to more than 3,000 students with time or geographic constraints.

Generally speaking, access, according to **Dr. Thomas**, is dependent upon geography and affordability. Financial aid is a key component. While “Promise” scholarships are very helpful, they are merit-based for students going directly from high school; persons who are returning to college as adults do not qualify for this aid. What is needed is more need-based financial aid, especially for first generation students who are reluctant to go into debt, as they perceive the risk is too high.

Dr. Thomas pointed out that the LCSC program in Coeur d’Alene is a degree-completion program only; the CDA campus is only for completion of the junior and senior years.

Dr. Thomas suggested that increased state support for professional-technical students at LCSC would help to reduce the rates charged, to be more in line with rates available at NIC, CSI and EITC. State support for all lower division students to pay the community college rate is another possible consideration for this committee, although she acknowledged the cost could be significant.

Senator Lodge asked if there are other colleges in the area competing with LCSC. **Dr. Thomas** replied that in Lewiston, there are no “for profits,” but there are other on-line courses. **Senator**

Lodge asked if there is financial aid for students who take a break in education and do not go directly from high school. Because of that lag time, do such students miss out on scholarship and other financial aid opportunities? **Dr. Thomas** responded that they do miss out, and offered the following suggestion: “Establish a program of need-based aid and remove the restrictions for students who do not go directly to college from high school.” **Dr. Thomas** added that support during the first couple of semesters is crucial; once students are in school again, then other aid becomes available. Within the Lewiston area, there are many non-traditional and first generation students who would benefit from need-based aid.

Senator Goedde asked how LCSC works with the community to help with economic development. **Dr. Thomas** said that they work with Valley Vision Economic Development Company, and stay in touch regularly with the Chamber of Commerce. St. Joseph’s Regional Medical Center is a major contributor to LCSC in resources and dollars. Since 2001, at the urging of the medical center, LCSC has added programs in radiographic technology and, at the same time, accreditation for that program. They have also added PACE, a program for accelerated certification in teacher education. In addition to the BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing), LCSC added the LPN (Licensed Practical Nursing) program in response to the need for nurses in skilled nursing centers and nursing homes. LCSC responded to the request of an area jet boat manufacturer by adding aluminum welding to the curriculum. **Dr. Thomas** added that they listen to the needs of the community and they serve the businesses within their region and want to continue to do that.

Senator Goedde asked if she believes that the lack of a local governing board has been a hindrance to their economic development programs. **Dr. Thomas** replied that LCSC is comfortable with its current abilities to be responsive to the community.

Representative Chadderdon commented that she has been impressed with the Bachelor of Science nursing degree program and asked **Dr. Thomas** to share the progression of a student leaving NIC and eventually graduating from LCSC. **Dr. Thomas** said that after the student graduates from NIC, which offers the 2-year associate’s degree in nursing, the student typically begins working and at the same time starts classes with LCSC working towards the baccalaureate degree. She added that LCSC has worked closely with NIC on articulation, and with the students in this transition. Transfer of general education credits is not a problem because the SBOE directed a common system that works very well and has been in place for approximately ten years. For other courses, the issue is one of choosing the right course needed for the major, whether the student stays at one institution or transfers to another. **Representative Chadderdon** asked for a comparison of the fees for PTE and academic courses. **Dr. Thomas** said that fees are the same for all full-time students; there are no differences.

Representative Rusche commented that Idaho is generally a low-income state and he is particularly concerned about students at the median household income level or below. How are we to go about helping them? He asked **Dr. Thomas** to comment on need-based aid and student tuition, and asked if we need to restructure tuition for better access. **Dr. Thomas** said that access and affordability go “hand in hand.” Providing assistance to institutions so they can charge lower tuition and fees is important, but so is need-based assistance, directly to students, especially low-income students and students who do not go directly to college. Her concern is that fees would be cut without receiving funding from another source.

Senator Davis directed attention to the issue of local control, and asked how the Legislature can help LCSC become more responsive and timely in responding to the needs of the community, given that it takes about one year to receive approval from the SBOE. **Dr. Thomas** replied that the SBOE has an 8-year plan to which all the institutions contribute, and the plan is reviewed yearly. Institutions can offer courses as special topics without waiting for SBOE approval. The other option is non-credit courses through workforce training. She replied that she has never seen where this was a time challenge for LCSC.

Senator Lodge asked if LCSC has difficulty in attracting quality faculty to their outreach areas. **Dr. Thomas** replied “yes and no.” Orofino is the only area where they hold “live” classes in the centers there. The other centers assist students with advising, computers, and online courses, so good faculty are involved in distance learning in remote locations. However, she said that they need more nurses qualified as nursing professors; they are very hard to come by. This is the area of greatest shortage. They also need good business faculty at the Ph.D. level. **Dr. Thomas** described her results when she contracted a consultant to help with this problem. By adding certification programs, the college became more flexible in the blend of faculty required, and this change has resulted in considerable cost savings.

Representative Smith asked what the tuition is on a per credit basis. **Dr. Thomas** replied that the tuition is \$3,900 for a full-time student; however, she did not have the actual break down for per credit hour. **Representative Bolz** referred to a document prepared by Matt Freeman, Legislative Services budget analyst, that illustrates what the actual cost per credit hour is to the institution to deliver instruction to students in Idaho universities. In the case of LCSC, that cost is \$387 for lower division, \$609 for upper division, and \$483 for total undergraduate cost. **Representative Rydall** later clarified that the cost is \$80 per credit hour at EITC.

Following a break for lunch, the committee reconvened at 12:40 p.m., **Representative Bolz** presiding.

Dr. Andrew Klein, Director for Education, Training and Research, Idaho National Laboratory (INL), said that based on the nature of what they do, they need a specialized, highly-trained, highly-educated workforce. INL is a growing institution that has projected the need for skills in technical (scientific and engineering) and management areas. Battelle Energy Alliance (BEA) is a limited liability company, which has a 10-year contract with INL. They are contracted with the federal Department of Energy to do its research, development, and demonstration of nuclear and other technologies.

INL offers a wide range of educational programs for many individuals and groups, from pre-college programs, to college and university programs, employee programs, and lab-university interactions.

The pre-college programs are centered on participation/simulation and teacher development/support, i.e., teach the teachers. The activities include a scholastic tournament, student action teams, summer teacher programs and teacher mini-grants for working with lab researchers. INL also gives grants to local school districts, including Project Lead the Way with District 91, Arco, and Fort Hall, and has developed the Idaho Science Academy (modeled on the Idaho Math Academy) with the Idaho Department of Education.

For colleges and universities, they work with the National University Consortium and Idaho University Consortium, and academic centers of excellence; they provide summer internships for undergraduates and graduates; and provide faculty fellowships. For employee programs, they work in conjunction with U of I, ISU, and BSU and other colleges and universities, including community and technical colleges, in providing support for employees to take classes and earn degrees. INL worked in conjunction with EITC, which helped fulfill the need to provide training in the area of radiation and contamination for security guards.

Dr. Klein discussed the “Education Triangle” or “Pyramid” and its importance relative to the educational spectrum beginning with pre-school at the lower level, up through community college, technical college, graduate, Ph.D. and post-doctorate at the top. The product and outcome is based on the depth of involvement in education and training and types of study. The educational experience of the student as he progresses through each level may result in that individual entering the real world out of community college/PTE, for example, or continue on in higher learning, reaching the post doctorate level, or research university. INL acts as an employer of individuals from the triangle; this includes a range of educational levels, from those who are highly educated to those with workforce training. INL also provides continuing education for employees.

A community college needs to be an affordable option as a “feeder” for those who want to seek four-year degrees from institutions of higher learning and for those who want to cap their education at a technician or administrative level. INL strongly endorses the investment for a statewide system of community colleges. INL takes the position to encourage that tuition and fees be reasonable and fair so that the lab, its employees and the community will participate in all the activities of the community college.

Senator Andreason asked if he sees a drop in grade point average in the third and fourth years for those students transferring from a community college into a four-year one. **Dr. Klein** replied that he does see a drop as students transition from a community college to the third year at a university, but does not see a drop when progressing from the second year at a university to the third year of the university. He added that some of the community college transfers are also transitioning from living at home to living away from home.

In response to questions from **Representative Boe and Representative Smith** regarding the collaboration between University of Idaho and Idaho State at University Place and how that resource fits with INL, **Dr. Klein** clarified that INL does research and development, hands on practical work and higher education, while University Place provides education through the bachelor’s level. They all fit together very well.

Dr. Klein concluded by saying that INL does much of its own training, but a compelling case can be made for community colleges and technical colleges, which are beneficial to large employers including INL.

Edith Irving, President, Idaho Alliance of Leaders in Nursing, and Chief Nursing Officer at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center, described how the current shortage of nurses in the workforce is a real problem, especially with the lack of specialized nurses in the areas of prenatal care and intensive care. Also, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find experienced nurses. She offered the following statistics:

- C Approximately 40% of the hospitals use contract or traveling nurses to deal with the shortage of RN's.
- C The average age of RN's in Idaho hospitals was 45.9 in 2003; 70% of those are 40 or older. Idaho must increase the number of nurse graduates to replace those who will retire in the next ten years.
- C Younger nurses are more likely to stay in cities, while rural hospitals have a higher proportion of nurses in their 40's and over 60.
- C There are increased costs to hospitals. The quality of patient care is threatened, i.e., there are more patients per nurse, increased errors, and the inevitable concern of restricted hospital admissions.
- C Currently, only about half of qualified applicants are admitted to RN programs due to the shortage of spaces in nursing programs.

Also of great concern is the issue of the shortage of nursing faculty. One of the reasons for this is because of salary. A nursing instructor in Idaho, with a master's degree, makes at least 40% less than a practicing nurse. Another reason is because of the limited number of nursing graduate programs in Idaho. There is only one master's in nursing program and no programs to obtain the Ph.D. The average age of faculty teaching in Idaho nursing programs in Idaho is over age 50, and only two nursing programs reported having any faculty under age 40. There needs to be increased funding for faculty as well as a consistent strategic approach for funding faculty.

Senator Andreason asked **Ms. Irving** to describe the scope of practice of an LPN in relation to the RN. **Ms. Irving** said that LPN's can do many of the same tasks as an RN, with the exception of administering some medications and performing certain procedures. An LPN cannot do in-depth patient assessments that would require a further assessment or intervention by an RN or a physician.

Senator Goedde referred to Mr. Joe Morris' remarks at the Coeur d'Alene meeting regarding the limited space for the practicum portion of a nurse's training, the clinical placement issues and the number of spaces needed for training practicums, and asked for comment. **Ms. Irving** said that the traditional clinical hours are very limited. However, there is the opportunity for expanding those hours and being more creative in scheduling clinical hours, i.e., utilizing non-traditional days and times as well as other settings like rural hospitals. There could be more use of simulators and manikins, to get around the limitations.

Representative Bolz asked how the nursing shortage situation compares in assisted living and nursing home institutions. **Ms. Irving** said that the shortages in those facilities are worse. They have a very difficult time recruiting RN's, and consequently, utilize LPN's more.

In response to a question by **Representative Boe**, **Ms. Irving** explained that a professor of nursing must have a master's degree and ultimately a Ph.D. Instructors with a master's degree earn 40% less than an LPN, and currently the ratio is one instructor to ten students.

Terry Butikofer, Business Manager, East Central Idaho Planning and Development Association (ECIPDA), said that the East-Central Idaho Planning and Development Association is a regional planning association formed in 1975 by the locally-elected officials of the nine counties of Region VI. They are the regional economic development district and are involved in preparing communities for growth through the creation of infrastructure where needed, workforce

development, and small business lending. ECIPDA operates and oversees federal training programs from CETA to the Job Training Partnership Act to the Workforce Investment Act, to help prepare youth, adults and dislocated workers to enter the labor force. The PTE program has been vital to them in preparing these younger and older Idahoans to go to work. They have utilized the education provided by EITC in about 95% of their classroom training efforts. ECIPDA and EITC have partnered together not only in preparing a more productive workforce, but in pursuing federal grant funds to aid in improving the facilities at EITC and to create⁴ a series of business development centers. EITC and ISU have utilized space in several of these centers to provide distance learning opportunities for students in isolated areas.

Economic development, especially business expansion and recruitment, revolves around a well-trained, well-qualified workforce. He said they are not only competing nationally, but worldwide as well. “We need to ensure that our small businesses, small industry, employers, and workers have workforce development tools and services available to increase their competitiveness and productivity.” Having access to skilled labor and quick response is vital. Their educational, economic development and local governance systems all have recognized success through local and regional management and implementation. Their economic and workforce development programs have been effective because of their willingness to work together with businesses, and civic and educational leaders to constantly respond to the changing needs of the community. They have found that improving the business climate, and attracting and retaining businesses through the preparation of a well-qualified workforce, happens best locally, with federal and state support.

In conclusion, **Mr. Butikofer** said that he believes that it is imperative that they have a local educational institution that continues to provide affordable education and training opportunities to a wide range of students, and that is flexible enough to meet the needs of the student and local business as they prepare students to enter the workforce. In any community college system, the professional-technical mission and flavor should be enhanced rather than replaced. It is his position that EITC would even better meet the needs of a diverse community if it were also a community college.

Senator Malepeai asked, given that ISU has an embedded community college mission and EITC has similar courses in adult education, what component is missing? **Mr. Butikofer** replied that a community college has broader appeal to the entire community and would provide more opportunities for education to a greater number of people.

Representative Smith noted that EITC, ISU, BYU-Idaho and University Place are all within a reasonable distance of one another. Given that, is there reason to think that this committee would vote for and support a community college in view of the other educational opportunities they may have? **Mr. Butikofer** responded that he would hope so. With the growth in population and the increase in small businesses, the need is there.

Representative Rusche pointed out that what is missing is the community college tuition rate, and affordability is the issue. Is the local community willing to levy a property tax to pay for community college? With federal support decreasing and tuition rates high, non-traditional students

⁴ Grammatical correction

are prevented from accessing the system. We need to provide opportunities to them that more affluent families have; we need low-income tuition support in some manner. **Mr. Butikofer** replied that federal assistance has filled the gap for some, but it is also an issue on which the public should be more informed. He asked, “Where will we be if we do not?” We either pay for education now and prepare our workforce, or suffer the consequences by losing our competitive edge; the jobs will go elsewhere.

Robb Chiles, President and CEO, Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce, said that the Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce is very supportive of creating a statewide community college system that is affordable, accessible, and flexible. The chamber’s Legislative Committee conducted research to find the answers to three basic questions:

- (1) Does the community want a community college in Idaho Falls?
- (2) How would a community college in Idaho Falls affect its businesses?
- (3) What percentage, if any, should be used from a funding source such as general fund, tuition and fees, property taxes, and other funding sources to fund a community college?

Based on this research, the Chamber found that Idaho Falls wants and needs a community college. A community college would help local businesses by giving the public access to further their educational goals and create a more skilled and qualified workforce, which would help increase production and provide for a more competitive job market. The business community can work in collaboration with a community college to help determine its curriculum to meet the needs of industry.

Based on 107 surveys, the Idaho Chamber of Commerce members reported that 50% of the funding should come from the state general fund, 26% from tuition and fees, 13% from property taxes, and 4% from other sources. **Mr. Chiles** said that if the chamber used its survey as the sole source of its data collection, it would appear that the business community would support using property taxes as a funding source. However, incorporating their other two research methods, it appears that the general community would not support a taxing district at this time. The chamber suggests the committee consider using the 1% increase in sales tax to help fund a statewide community college system. Given the infrastructure that currently exists in Idaho Falls, it is clearly evident that a community college could function at a relatively low cost to the state. A one percent increase in the sales tax, should there be one, should be used for higher education, not K-12.

Senator Lodge asked what research had been done in the community to lead him to believe that the taxpayers at this time would not fund a taxing district. **Mr. Chiles** said that their polls of business members, open forums and one-on-one encounters with citizens indicates that one would not pass.

Senator Goedde asked if he thought that EITC is hampered because it does not have a local board governing the college. **Mr. Chiles** said that he does not think that EITC is hampered. They have an Idaho Falls Higher Education Advisory Council made up of community business leaders that meet once per quarter to provide input to all higher education institutions in the region, and provide feedback on business needs.

Senator Goedde expressed concern for the taxpayers of Kootenai County who pay property tax in support of the local community college, yet here in eastern Idaho, EITC is available to local citizens

as a “free ride” because they do not pay a property tax. **Mr. Chiles** responded that we are in this situation now, and we need to respond to the local need. We need to figure out how education can be made available to everybody, whether it be through the general fund, property tax, or tuition and fees.

Representative Rusche commented that students at baccalaureate institutions are paying a higher rate for lower division courses rather than having the property taxpayer subsidize them.

Senator Davis responded to **Senator Goeddes’** concern for the inequity to property taxpayers by suggesting that we could take the M&O off the property tax for both CSI and NIC from this point forward, and apply the same in Bonneville for an Idaho Falls campus and similar treatment for a western Treasure Valley campus.

Co-chair Representative Bolz opened the floor to public comment. Three persons offered testimony at this time.

Matt Hunter, Executive Director of the Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce, said that in making community colleges affordable, it is very important that the community college plan for Idaho make use of existing facilities around the state since we do not have money available for new infrastructure. We do not have funds for the creation of new college administrations. He commented that universities, such as BSU, must be involved as they already have the infrastructure, administrations and accreditations in place to make a community college system work.

ISU has fulfilled the need for workforce development in the greater Pocatello area because it has the ability to quickly develop training programs for new and existing employers. Some of those employers are: AMI Semiconductor, Premier Technology, SME Steel, Sho Ban Tribes, Farmers Insurance, and the U.S. Navy at INL. He said that ISU must have a role in whatever community college system is ultimately created.

Larry Gahn, Bannock County Commissioner, urged the committee to understand the unique mission of ISU and focus on the “breadth” and “depth” that ISU provides. ISU gives good access and value for the dollar. Its educational focus and partnerships have filled all the gaps. “Investments and decisions do need to be made that do not detract from current practices.” He said that the “players” in the economic development community are concerned about ISU possibly losing its ability to relate to and address economic needs and economic conditions as they are presented in their community.

ISU plays a key role in employment retraining for the underemployed and for displaced employees. He shared that as a county clerk in Bannock County, he has interviewed many people; some were students from the community college as well as the university. In every instance of interviewing students, the ISU applicants were always more mature, more prepared, and more competitive. He suggested that the cost is not always up front, and sometimes the investment in the outcome you get is worth that initial investment. There needs to be a successful EITC, a successful community college system for the citizens, and a successful ISU as well. However, ISU already offers many of the programs that are being proposed in a new community college system.

John McGimpsey, legislative candidate, said that education is by far the number 1 issue brought up by citizens that he has spoken with. He said that there is a tremendous need in this community for higher education that is affordable. Those advocating for a community college are people who: have graduated from EITC or have a two-year degree from ISU and recognize the benefit; adults who need additional education to improve their families; and parents who cannot afford to send their children to a 4-year university. A community college would give them options for improving themselves and their families. He has not met many who believe that a community college is not worth funding, either from sales tax or property tax. Property tax issues in this community are not the same as property tax issues in Blaine, Kootenai, and Ada counties. He believes it is the state's responsibility to provide a low-cost, affordable alternative.

Representative Bolz announced that the next meeting of the interim Committee on Community Colleges will be held on the CSI campus in Twin Falls on September 11, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.